

## Vermont Ranked As Healthiest State by United Health Foundation for Second Consecutive Year

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MINNEAPOLIS - Vermont was ranked the healthiest state in the nation as the United Health Foundation today released the 2008 America's Health Rankings: A Call to Action for Individuals & Their Communities™.

Vermont moved up from 16th in 1990 to second in 2006, and is first in the nation for the second consecutive year – ranking among the top 10 healthiest states in 14 of 22 health measures.

Vermont was praised in the report for declining smoking rates (17.6 percent of the population), a slower rise in obesity than the national average, and the number of people without health insurance remaining low. Other strengths cited in the report include a low percentage of children in poverty, ready access to primary care for residents, a high rate of high school graduation, and high immunization coverage.

"The well-regarded America's Health Rankings proves Vermont continues to make smart health investments and Vermonters are making wise choices," said Gov. Jim Douglas. "A cornerstone of our efforts is the Vermont Blueprint for Health. This innovative chronic care initiative is continuing to gain national recognition as a superb model for health reform."

The Vermont Blueprint for Health works to provide the information, tools and support that Vermonters with chronic conditions need to manage their own health, and that clinicians need to keep their patients healthy.

Two areas noted in the report that Vermont can be particularly proud of, according to Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD, are the prevalence of smoking has decreased by 43 percent since 1990, and the infant mortality rate has decreased by 37 percent.

"Vermont's approach to health care is focused on prevention, and we will work hard to continue to provide communities, businesses and individuals with the most effective programs and healthier living opportunities," Dr. Davis said.

### **About America's Health Rankings**

America's Health Rankings™ analyzes 22 different health measures, which are a combination of health determinants and health outcomes. Health determinants are factors that can affect the future health of a population. Health outcomes measure what has already occurred, either through death or missed days due to illness. Actions to improve health determinants will eventually improve health outcomes for states and the nation. This year's report includes two new metrics: air pollution and geographic disparity.

America's Health Rankings™ is the result of a collaborative partnership between United Health Foundation, the American Public Health Association, and Partnership for Prevention.

To view the entire report, please visit [www.americashealthrankings.org](http://www.americashealthrankings.org) (exit VDH).

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